

Message Text

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PAGE 01 USBERL 01113 01 OF 02 101600Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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FM USMISSION USBERLIN
TO AMEMBASSY BONN
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AMEMBASSY BERLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 USBERLIN 1113

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: EGEN, EINV, GW, WB
SUBJECT: RIEBSCHLAEGER CRITICIZES FRG PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION'S
PROPOSALS

REF: USBERLIN 1032

SUMMARY: BERLIN SENATOR FOR FINANCE RIEBSCHLAEGER HAS BLUNTLY
CRITICIZED FRG PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION'S BERLIN VIABILITY ASSIS-
TANCE PROGRAM, CHARGING LACK OF COMPETENCE BY COMMISSION MEMBERS
FOR DEALING WITH COMPLICATED FINANCE PROBLEMS AND INDICATING
THAT MANY OF PROPOSALS WOULD BE FINANCIALLY HARMFUL
FOR THE CITY. RIEBSCHLAEGER'S STATEMENTS DREW IMMEDIATE CRITICISM
FROM FDP CHAIRMAN LUEDER, IHK PRESIDENT ELFE AND A VARIETY
OF BERLIN CDU SPOKESMEN. RIEBSCHLAEGER QUIETLY BUT VERY
CLEARLY ENCOURAGED FROM BEHIND THE SCENES BY GOVERNING MAYOR STOBBE,
SUBSEQUENTLY DREW BACK SOMEWHAT FROM HIS ORIGINAL POSTION,
AND MUTED OR WITHDREW CHARGES OF PERSONAL IMCOMPETENCY OF
PROGRAM ORIGINATORS. HE MAINTAINED HIS POSTION (WITH WHICH THE
GOVERNING MAYOR AND SPD PRIVATELY AGREE) THAT SOME PROGRAMS
WERE POTENTIALLY HARMFUL TO THE CITY. BERLIN CDU PLANS HOUSE
DEBATE ON RIEBSCHLAEGER'S REMARKS MAY 11. END SUMMARY.

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PAGE 02 USBERL 01113 01 OF 02 101600Z

1. AT CONCLUSION OF ROUTINE PRESS CONFERENCE MAY 2 IN
WHICH HE HAD OUTLINED IMPORTANT BUT NON-CONTROVERSIAL
SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET FOR BERLIN GOVERNMENT, SENATOR FOR
FINANCE KLAUS RIEBSCHLAEGER ALLOWED HIMSELF TO BE DRAWN
INTO DISCUSSION OF PROGRAM DEVELOPED BY FRG PRESIDENTIAL
COMMISSION TO AID BERLIN (REFTEL). APPARENTLY SPEAKING
HIS MIND BEFORE GIVING SERIOUS THOUGHT TO THE CONSEQUENCES

OF WHAT HE HAD TO SAY (ALL TOO TYPICAL FOR RIEBSCHLAEGER),
THE BERLIN SENATOR FOR FINANCE TOLD ASSEMBLED JOURNALISTS
THAT HE VERY MUCH DOUBTED
THE COMPETENCE AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE
FRG PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION FOR BERLIN, ALTHOUGH HE ADDED HE
CERTAINLY DID NOT QUESTION THE GOODWILL WHICH THE GROUP DEMON-
STRATED FOR BERLIN. RIEBSCHLAEGER NOTED IN PARTICULAR THAT THE
PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION HAD WORKED FOR LONG PERIODS WITH-
OUT THE DOCUMENTATION WHICH HE CONSIDERED NECESSARY TO
DEVELOP ITS PROGRAMS. HE ADDED THAT AT NO TIME TO DATE
HAD THE FEDERAL MINISTER FOR FINANCE, WHO HAS TO FUND
THE DM 900 MILLION PROGRAM, PARTICIPATED IN THE DISCUSSIONS.
RIEBSCHLAEGER CALLED THE DECISION TO DEVELOP
PROGRAMS WITHOUT CONSULTING THE FEDERAL MINISTER FOR
FINANCE "ADVENTUROUS" BECAUSE IT COULD DESTROY THE AT-
MOSPHERE OF TRUST AND UNDERSTANDING WHICH, ACCORDING TO
RIEBSCHLAEGER, CURRENTLY EXISTS BETWEEN BERLIN AND BONN
ON FINANCIAL MATTERS. RIEBSCHLAEGER ADMITTED THAT THE
COMMISSION HAD NOT YET PUBLISHED ITS PROPOSALS IN FINAL
FORM AND WOULD ONLY DO SO ON MAY 22. THE CONTENTS OF
THE PROPOSALS, HOWEVER, ARE IN FACT KNOWN TO THE PUBLIC
THROUGH PRESS LEAKS. IN RIEBSCHLAEGER'S OPINION "A
GREAT DEAL MORE THAN EDITORIAL WORK" WILL BE REQUIRED
BEFORE THE PROPOSALS ARE PUBLISHED IF THE PACKAGE IS TO
PROVE AT ALL WORKABLE.

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PAGE 03 USBERL 01113 01 OF 02 101600Z

2. BERLIN FDP CHAIRMAN (AND SENATOR FOR ECONOMICS)
WOLFGANG LUEDER IMMEDIATELY TERMED RIEBSCHLAEGER'S CRITI-
CISM OF THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS "INCOM-
PREHENSIBLE." LUEDER REGRETTED RIEBSCHLAEGER'S PUBLIC
STATEMENT, WHICH IN LUEDER'S OPINION CAST SERIOUS DOUBT
ON THE POSSIBLE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE BERLIN COMMISSION'S
PROGRAM. LUEDER ALSO CHARGED THAT THE SENATOR FOR
FINANCE, BY INSULTING THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS, HAD DONE
NOTHING TO HELP BERLIN. CONCLUDING, LUEDER SAID IT
IS THE TASK OF BERLIN'S POLITICAL PARTIES AND OF THE
BERLIN SENATE "TO ACCEPT GRATEFULLY THE POSITIVE SUGGEST-
IONS FOR STRENGTHENING BERLIN AND TO USE THEM TO THE
CITY'S ADVANTAGE."

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PAGE 01 USBERL 01113 02 OF 02 101611Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 USBERLIN 1113

3. PRESIDENT OF THE IHK HORST ELFE JOINED LUEDER IN
CRITICIZING RIEBSCHLAEGER'S REMARKS AS DID CDU PARTY
CHAIRMAN LORENZ, DCU HOUSE CAUCUS LEADER HEINRICH LUMMER
AND CDU HOUSE SPOKESMAN FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS KLAUS
LANDOWSKY. THE THRUST OF ALL CDU STATEMENTS WAS THAT
RIBSCHLAEGER'S REMARKS HAD BEEN IRRESPONSIBLE AND HARM-
FUL TO BERLIN INTERESTS. LANDOWSKY WENT SO FAR AS TO
CALL FOR RIEBSCHLAEGER'S RESIGNATION.

4. GOVERNING MAYOR STOBBE WAS NOT SURPRISINGLY UPSET
BY THE STORM WHICH DEVELOPED OVER RIEBSCHLAEGER'S REMARKS.
WE KNOW FROM SEVERAL SOURCES THAT STOBBE WAS NOT UPSET
BY WHAT RIEBSCHLAEGER HAD TO SAY; HE AGREES THAT
SEVERAL OF THE COMMISSION PROPOSALS AND IN PARTICULAR
THE PROPOSAL TO DO AWAY WITH THE "GEWERBESTEUER" ARE
PTOENTIAALLY HARMFUL FOR BERLIN'S FINANCIAL SITUATION.
STOBBE WAS TROUBLED BY RIEBSCHALEGER'S BLUTNESS, HOW-
EVER, AND BY THE FACT THAT RIEBSCHLAEGER'S COMMENTS
HAD NOT BEEN CARFULLY THOUGHT OUT AND CORRGINATED IN
ADVANCE. THE GOVERNING MAYOR SAW RIEBSCHALEGER WITHIN
HOURS OF THIS INTIAL PRESS CONFERENCE AND AS A RESULT
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PAGE 02 USBERL 01113 02 OF 02 101611Z

RIEBSCHLAEGER MET A SECOND TIME WITH THE PRESS TO RE-
TRACT CHARGES OF INCOMPETENCE AMONG THE PRESIDENTIAL
COMMISSION MEMBERS. HE DID NOT, HOWEVER, DRAW BACK THE
SUBSTANTIVE CRITICISMS OF THE PROGRAM. THE SENAT PRESS
OFFICE IN RESPONSE TO INQUIRIES POINTED TO GOVERNING
MAYOR STOBBE'S STATEMENT AT HIS APRIL 28 PRESS CONFERENCE
IN WHICH HE WELCOMED THE WORK OF THE PRESIDENTIAL
COMMISSION BUT WARNED THAT CONSIDERABLY MORE WORK WAS

REQUIRED BEFORE SOME OF THE PROGRAMS COULD BE IMPLEMENTED
AND THAT PERHAPS SOME MIGHT NOT WORK OUT IN PRACTICE.
STOBBE HAS RESOLVED, HOWEVER, NOT TO COMMENT DIRECTLY
ON SENATOR REIBSCHLAEGER'S REMARKS NOR WILL HE PUBLICLY
"REIN HIM IN" AS THE CDU HAS DEMANDED HE DO.

5. SPOKESMEN FOR BOTH THE BERLIN CDU AND FDP (PARTICULAR-
LY MEMBERS OF THE LEFT WING OF THE LATTER PARTY) HAVE
CONTINUED THROUGHOUT THE WEEK TO CRITICIZE RIEBSCHLAEGER
PUBLICLY. THE BERLIN CDU INTENDS TO CONTINUE ITS ATTACK
DURING THE MAY 11 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SESSION.
BERLIN'S SPD, REALIZING THAT ITS DEPUTY CHAIRMAN
SPOKE TOO HASTILY AND ABRUPTLY, IS ATTEMPTING TO KEEP
ITS HEAD DOWN AND HOPES IT WILL BE ABLE TO RIDE OT THE
CURRENT STORM OF PROTEST BY REFUSING TO ENAGAE IN AN
EXTENDED PUBLIC DEBATE. GEORGE

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